

DISCONTENT

"MOTHER OF PROGRESS"

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WHOLE NO. 64.

JEAN GRAVE UPON GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS.

"Anarchists are altogether against organization—they are a demented people," is the remark repeatedly heard. True it is that more than one Anarchist, with reasoning power not of the highest, has, either in public meetings or through the press, repudiated every form of groupment or organization; some because they confounded the term organization with authority, others because wishing for individualism in its purest form they found that to accept what seemed meant by organization also meant the yielding up of individual liberty. This, however, did not prevent either one or the other uniting with comrades of a like mind and working together with them as propagandists in some manner agreeable to them. "That is not organization," they would say to those who drew their attention to the seeming contradiction, whilst the most stubborn would add, "It is simply a matter of free agreement."

Agreement, organization—different words designating the same thing—let such pass. The discussion of words leads invariably to metaphysics, and that is ever a pressing danger in a discussion upon theories, leading too often to confusion over the simplest questions.

If there is one thing certain it is that, given the life of man and his moral, intellectual and industrial development, he cannot live except in a society; a return to his former isolated position, that of the family, would mean retrogression. But equally certain is it that it is wholly unnecessary for men to live in the midst of vast conglomerations, as is the case with our modern cities, in order to exist; they can spread themselves over the surface of the globe in small autonomous groups of like affinities. What is necessary for them is to be living in close relation to other groups for the exchange of ideas and the products of their activities. Association is an intellectual need with man, for in order to develop his mind he must exchange ideas with many people, just as, materially, it has become a necessity to make use of the various complicated tools invented by his thought. To reduce the time necessary for the production of the material things of life, or to lengthen the hours consecrated to study, observation or repose; to contrive that necessary labor should be merely a question of health, and not remain as now a matter of painful torment; such is the aim of human evolution, and therefore everything tends towards association. So it is that whenever a human being desires to accomplish something, he finds himself obliged to join his efforts to those of his fellow men who think with him, in order to expand and give greater expression to these efforts; and this action occurs even with the most headstrong individualists, with those who deny the utility of groups.

Now, when one becomes part of a

group of individuals, it is in view of combined effort for the furtherance of some particular object; in common action men seek to equalize such efforts, everyone taking the place which best suits him and his power of activity. Whether this be called organization or agreement matters not if the thing in view is accomplished. I have already many times stated that there is no occasion to frighten ourselves, or to dissect words, but rather to seek for the meaning hidden within them.

It must, however, be admitted that this terror on the part of some of becoming engulfed in an authoritarian organization was at one time justified by the tendency shown to resuscitate large federations with their central committees, the common program, and like gear, borrowed from authoritarian organizations, which it was supposed had already been changed because rechristened with new names or propped up with new formulas, but not with the true spirit of the initiative. Alas! among Anarchists this has not yet reached the intensity it should have reached in a body which lays absolute claim to it; still the hatred to authority, to enrollment, the distaste for common rules, was strong enough among Anarchists to stamp out all such efforts.

The trouble is, that after a long period of activity, the groups have become dislocated, and that while the number of Anarchists increases the groups themselves become less numerous and active. Police persecutions have had much to do with the disappearance of groups. The prospect, so soon as one becomes known as an Anarchist, of having police spies at your door, making inquiries of your neighbors, your landlord, your employers; of being marked down for future searches and supervision—such a prospect has nothing attractive about it, least of all in localities where inquiries of this nature lead employers to blacklist you, thus condemning you and yours to misery and hunger. But there is another reason for the non success of groups, and this lies in the mental attitude which leads many Anarchists to expect the immediate realization of their wishes, to hope for some magic transformation of existing social conditions, and, while waiting for the touch of the magic wand, they are blind to points of detail, a complete alteration in which might easily be realized immediately.

However convinced a man may be, he finds it necessary to mingle with other individuals, to enter into discussion with them, to be conversant with current events and all that is doing or happening. Discussion and controversy give rise to new arguments. Again, what is the worth of conviction without action? It is all very well to liberate oneself from prejudices, to detest authority and exploitation, but these will only yield to blows; those who have learned the baseness of such things must of necessity try to lead others to understand them

also. This assuredly may be done and done individually. It is a work of importance, and one not to be despised; yet ten men who unite and are bent upon taking the initiative are far more powerful than were each to work individually on his own account.

Why do they not unite? It is not necessary when forming or joining a group to make the fact widely known, or to publish every meeting or call in the papers! What is to prevent three, four, five or ten comrades who know each other from uniting, from holding discussions together, without in any way forming a conspiracy or secret society or making themselves known to the police?

There will never be want of work. Is there not ready-made material for active propaganda in every aspect of social life? It only remains for the individual to seek the most attractive to himself; the principle to bear in mind being that it is not the number of members which matters, but that they shall be in full agreement upon the thing they want, and each and all imbued with a firm resolve to work for its realization regardless of the amount of time and patience required to secure their end; for we must not forget that besides a lack of the true spirit of initiative we are also wanting in persistence and the ability, so to speak, of following up a trail. Once we have decided to work for a certain end, we yearn for its rapid realization, and since we are apt to forget that time and patience will often bring with them the means that may be wanting, quick discouragement follows.

Then, again, outside the work that may be done, we learn to know and enter into a closer fellowship with each other, an important fact. It was owing to such conditions that during certain incidents of the Dreyfus affair in September and October of '98, a handful of brawlers, like those of the Patriots' league, became masters of the streets, because, organized into bands, they knew each other, knew who were with and who against them; while the revolutionists, isolated, lost in the crowd and not knowing each other, were reduced to utter helplessness for want of knowing their own numbers. It would also be to good advantage if each group, instead of merely pursuing its individual ends, arranged—for human activity can well embrace several things at a time—for its members to affiliate themselves to other groups, so that we should finally see an uninterrupted chain drawing each individual to his fellow.

As to specifying the acts of propaganda in view of which groups could be formed, it is hardly possible, seeing that it is demand which creates supply; aid to the victims of oppression, the publication of bills, placards, pamphlets and papers; the steady support of such as already exist; the founding of libraries for the circulation of literature among non-sympathizers around us; groups who will arrange for the purchase of

Anarchist books and pamphlets for the use of libraries; the forming of an office for intervention in strikes—is it possible to enumerate all that might be done? How many things that seem impossible to us today, prejudices and institutions apparently impossible to uproot, that tomorrow we might be strong enough to overthrow? What might not be organized: a strike against land lords, a strike of conscripts, refusal to obey the civil government, to pay taxes, etc.? What is requisite is merely the will to agitate and act when the need arrives—once ready, the line to pursue will be easily found.

THE END OF IT ALL.

Politics have now become a gainful profession, like advocacy, stock-broking, the dry goods trade, or the getting up of companies. People go into it to live by it, primarily for the sake of the salaries attached to the places they count on getting; secondarily, in view of the opportunities it affords of making incidental and sometimes illegitimate gains" (Bryce on American politics, quoted by Lecky). There is the end of it all. There is the goal to which the path that we are all treading leads sooner or later. Place power before men as the prize that they are to win; glorify conflict; teach three men to trample on and reduce to servitude two men; preach the modern superstition of the omnipotent vote; use gilded phrases to cover lies; and you may count with almost certainty on leading the nation, that listens to you, neck deep into a slough of mean corruption, from which they shall only escape after much bitter experience by some miracle of salvation.—Free Life.

As labor is the parent of all wealth it is plain that he who acquires wealth without labor abstracts just so much from those who work. All interest is the giving of something for nothing. It is simply payment for the privilege of working. From the nature of the case, labor ultimately pays all interest, and every dollar taken for interest is a dollar taken from the wages of labor. There is no getting over this fact, for interest returns no valid service or labor for what it takes. A shoemaker and a hatter may exchange with each other equitably, and have something to show. But the man who pays interest has nothing to show but his own labor, less the interest paid!—J. F. Bray.

Work, and not bondholding, has made our country rich. The man who gets his living by coupon clipping adds nothing to the wealth of the nation. Every idler is a dead loss to the commonwealth. The bondholder's debt is like unto a huge iron ball that is rolling over our land, crushing out industries and eating up the substance of the people.—Ex.

"Praise cannot save the false, nor malice kill the true."

DISCONTENT

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GRATULATORY.

The following exordium is taken from Equality's mouthpiece, "Freedom":

"A list of queries has been handed in to the colony notes man with a request that he aid the secretary through his columns in giving to the interested public the quality and quantity of information they are clamoring for. The first question that attracts the editorial gaze is a hard one to tackle in view of the exhibition of sentiment we have had with regard to it in the immediate past. Yet, hard as it may seem to strike the median line, the prospective members have a right to such information, given in as unbiased a manner as possible:

"Can a man or woman live according to free love in Equality and not be interfered with by other members?"

"Not long ago an attempt of this kind was made and it failed ignominiously. Just how much of the opposition displayed was due to the quality of 'love' exhibited is a matter of conjecture, neither is it known to what extent the feeling of opposition might have been suppressed had all parties concerned in the affair been of the ideal sort where good morals are exhibited in every-day actions."

To which I beg leave to add: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," especially for this last manifestation of his bounty which makes one spot on earth a fit place for supersensitive marplots to reside with an abiding faith that naught can arise to bring a blush upon the cheek of modesty; where vice, in its multifarious forms, is relegated to the shades of oblivion.

I am here interrupted by a voice at my elbow saying: "Hold, enough!" Upon inquiry I am informed it is the devil's imp, who further says: "That clipping, like many statements, holy truths found in the Bible, must be taken with a few grains of allowance. That eulogium you are so intent upon fulminating is the paltriest balderdash. You just ask the 'Colony Notes Man' if prostitution in its basest form is banished from Equality's marriage beds? If secret vice is a stranger within its gates? If lying, envy, jealousy, hypocrisy, backbiting are unknown factors to its immaculate denizens? And if he replies, Yes, sir-r-r; you lay your index finger alongside your proboscis, wink your weather eye, and draw out p-e-r-h-a-p-s; then sit down and pen the free lover's creed, ask him to criticise it, probe it, and improve upon it, if he can, and, my word for it, he will ignominiously slink within his own nonentity again and revile those whose aims in life he is as ignorant of as a Zulu chief is of higher mathematics, or else knowing the impregnable basis upon which it is founded has not the moral courage to stand by his convictions."

Ahem! thanking his satanic majesty's imp for his timely monition I will endeavor to edify those who revile us, trusting that the scintillations from my

pen may dispel a moiety of the moral miasma permeating and penetrating every avenue of social life, and that, at least, some of the would-be erudite philosophers posing as educators in the various reform movements, may in time become sufficiently emancipated from ecclesiastical thralldom as to regard free love with reason, so that in referring to it, or us, they may be enabled to inject more logic and less sophism, more argument and less assertion, into their writings.

With this prelude I lay down the proposition that no one can be a free lover with whom nature was chary in the bestowment of brains, or whose perceptive and reflective faculties have been benumbed by contact with fashionable assumptions and crime-breeding hypocrisies. The class of people calling themselves free lovers, if true to their creed, ARE the safest people in the world. A conscientious, genuine man, or woman, of this class is so far above the ordinary standard that they are naturally misunderstood by sensual men and women.

The free lover's creed as understood and accepted by us, is, "no man has any right, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, to approach a woman sexually till she intimates her wish to hold such relation. The man who coaxes, pleads with, or uses any influence whatever, to induce a woman to yield to his embrace, when, if let alone, she would have no such feeling, is guilty of a violation of nature's law, is a sexual sinner, no matter how much the law says he has a right to a woman's person to whom he is legally tied.

The free lover holds that woman is the arbiter in this matter, and any violation of her prerogative brings disease in its various forms, where otherwise there would be health. Nature protects man; it does not protect woman. She cannot compel man to respect her wishes, but he can violate her person, therefore man is safe with the control in woman's hands. She is not safe with the control in his."

With this belief I do not hesitate to say that the man or woman who persecutes another because of an honest difference of opinion on sex and its uses, and for honest action based upon such opinion, so long as such action does not infringe upon the rights of others. The man or woman who thus persecutes is a social bigot and I very much question if they can know what PURITY is.

One thing is certain: a low thought or degrading idea of sex cannot enter the mind of an upright, intellectual man or woman and I ask, is it not time that the question of sex—sexual association—be studied as becomes philosophers.

"Oh, I wish it were respectable hypocrisy to shun, And let the world know what we are by what we've said and done; To teach the little children they are not all defiled Because Eve ate the apple where knowledge sweetly smiled."

O. B. SERVER.

The worst brutes are the masters of trade and manufacture who rob childhood of its happy hours, and by the weary grind of youth and old age alike increase the wealth wherewith they may enjoy the world's good, and by munificent gifts to church and school purchase public favor and heavenly bliss.—Selected.

IMAGES THAT MUST BE BROKEN.

DEAR COMRADES: In DISCONTENT, No. 60, I outlined a way, in my mind, out of the present systems of slavery under which we all labor. I now want to show you that before we can pass out that way we must first break down several images, or gods, chief among which is the god of gold. In holy (?) writ we read—Daniel 3:1: "Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold; whose height was three score cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon." I don't want any of you to think I vouch for the veracity of this scripture, but, contrarywise, I want it understood that I doubt all the truths vouchsafed for by Christians in that "book of books." But what I do want you to understand is that all the rulers of christendom are now calling on the Shadrachs, Meshachs and Abed-negos of today to fall down and worship that self-same image, or golden god.

Notwithstanding the dimensions of that god of Nebuchadnezzar seem to be somewhat fishy, unless the image was very thin, it nevertheless shows that the Babylonians worshiped the golden god as well as the Jews of old or the Christians of modern times.

Neither do I believe that the three Hebrew children were cast into a hell-hot, fiery furnace and came out alive, because I am one of those damned fools who believe fire will burn under any circumstances, no difference what the believers in this golden god may say about it. Why didn't the ropes refuse to choke Spies, Parsons, Fisher and Engel to death for refusing to fall down and worship the golden image that McCormick had set up in Chicago?

That the Jews worshipped the golden god we have abundant evidence. In Exodus 32:2-4, we read: "And Aaron said unto them: Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. (3) And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. (4) And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf; and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." This was done while Moses was off fashioning images of gold after his own liking, and when he came down from the mountain and found Aaron and the Israelites worshipping an image of their own make he got so damned mad that he threw down his tables of stones and broke them to pieces.

Now, we will stop and see what was the fashion of his images. In Exodus 37:6 to 8 inclusive, we read: "And he made the mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half was the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. (7) And he made two cherubims of gold, beaten out of one piece made he them, on the two ends of the mercy seat; (8) One cherub on the end on this side, and another cherub on the other end on that side; out of the mercy seat made he the cherubims on the two ends thereof," etc.

Now, as to what those cherubims resembled we are left in the dark, unless we take them to be images of God, who according to the book was a man.

But the modern Christians have innovated on that idea and make their cherubs, or angel images, like women, probably because they are prettier than men. The only thing certain about it is that all their images were made, or overlaid, with pure gold. For evidence of that fact read the 36 and 37 chapters of Exodus; also the building and ornamenting of Solomon's temple, 1 Kings, chapter 6, and many other passages, too numerous to mention.

That the writers of the New Testament worshipped the golden god there is also plenty of proof. They paved the streets of their New Jerusalem with pure gold. They, however, went off after phantoms instead of making real images, probably because they didn't have the gold to make them out of. But their lord and savior speaks of refining the pure gold with fire and burning up the dross. They were also far enough advanced to know the value of land titles measured by the GOLDEN RULE, or golden god. In Acts 5:1 to 10 inclusive, we read: "But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession (2) and kept back part of the price (his wife also being privy to it) and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet. (3) But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost and to keep back part of the price of the land? (4) While it remained was it not thine own? and after it was sold was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. (5) And Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and gave up the ghost. And great fear came on all them that heard these words. (6) And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out and buried him. (7) And it was about the space of three hours after when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. (8) And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether you sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. (9) Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. (10) Then she fell down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carried her forth and buried her by her husband."

I don't vouch for the truth of this scripture, literally, any more than for any other quotations; but it shows not only that they worshipped the golden god but also his ally, the land title. Strange, isn't it, that Ananias and Sapphira should die for telling lies about the sale of land, while so many others lie continually about similar transactions, but instead of dying instantly the god of gold prospers them. Why did they take Ananias out and bury him without his wife's knowledge, although she came in where he died in about the space of three hours? Treating her wrongfully, wasn't it? They didn't have the sympathy for her that the worshippers of the same god would have today. It reminds me of an anecdote I once heard of some Irish workmen who were rearing a building for some worshipper of the golden god. While carrying up his hod one slave to the money god, by the name of Timothy Kelley,

lost his balance, fell to the ground and broke his neck. His comrades, like clever men that they were, picked him up, but instead of taking him off and burying him without his wife's knowledge and consent, they started with him to his house for her advice on the subject. After they were started it occurred to them that it would be taking her too much by surprise to enter the house with her dead husband without first telling her what had happened. So they dispatched one of their number to go ahead and tell her. As he left the boss admonished him, "Break the news aisy, do you mind?" "Indade, I will, he answered, as he ran. He came to the house and knocked on the door like he meant to break it down. When a woman opened it he said, "Is here where the wider Kelley lives?" The woman answered, "Well, me name's Kelley, but devil the bit of a wider that I am." "Wy," said the news carrier, "Ye're a liar. Tim fell off the lather a while ago and broke his neck; and they're bringing him home, and I've come ahead of them to break the news to ye aisy." The apostles did not so much as tell Sapphira that she was a widow before they buried Ananias, but performed that SACRED duty before he had been dead three hours. It also proves that the first Christians were Communists although the saints of today send all such to the orthodox hell a gilpin. More anon about the golden god. From the heathen,

IMAGE BREAKER.

TWO PICTURES—THE IMMORAL AND THE MORAL WOMAN.

Leaving Mr. Agassiz, busy with his collections, we went up the lake through a strange region, half aquatic, half terrestrial, where land seemed at odds with water. Half an hour's row brought us to the landing of the village for which we were bound. Usually the villages stand on the bank of the lake or river, a stone's throw from the shore, for the convenience of fishing and bathing. But this one was at some distance, with a nicely kept path winding through the forest. It stood on the brow of a hill overlooking the valley and the little stream at its foot. The establishment consisted of a number of buildings, the most conspicuous being a large, open room, which the Indian senhora who did the honors of the house told me was their reception room, and was often used by the whites from Manoa and the neighborhood for an evening dance, when they came out in a large company and passed the night. A low wall, some three or four feet in height, ran along the sides, wooden benches being placed against them for their whole length. The two ends were closed from top to bottom with a wall made of palm thatch, exceedingly pretty, fine and smooth and of a soft straw color. At the upper end stood an immense embroidery frame, looking as if it might have served for Penelope's web, but in which was stretched an unfinished hammock of palm thread, the senhora's work. She sat down on a low stool before it and worked a little for my benefit, showing me how the two layers of transverse threads were kept apart by a thick, polished piece of wood, something like a long, broad ruler. Through the opening thus made the shuttle is passed with the cross thread, which is then pushed down

and straightened in its place by means of the same piece of wood.

After we had rested for a while, hammocks of various colors and texture being immediately brought and hung up for our accommodation, the gentlemen went down to bathe in the lake, while the senhora and her daughter, a very pretty Indian woman, showed me the rest of the establishment. The elder of the two had the direction of everything now, as the master of the house was absent, having a captain's commission in the army.

The room I have described stood on one side of a cleared and neatly swept ground, about which, at various distances, stood a number of houses consisting of one room. But beside these there was one larger house, containing two or three rooms, and having a veranda in front. This was the senhora's private establishment. At a little distance down the hill was the mandioca kitchen and all the accompanying apparatus. Nothing could be neater than the whole area of this space, and while we were there two or three girls were sent to sweep it afresh with their stiff twig brooms. Around lay the plantation of mandioca and cocoa, with here and there a few coffee shrubs. On the return of the gentlemen we took leave, though very warmly pressed to stay to breakfast. At parting our Indian hostess presented me with a wicker basket of fresh eggs and some alligator pears.

In the course of the conversation with the senhora I was reminded of a social feature which strikes us the more extraordinary the longer we remain on the Amazon, on account of its generality. Here were people of gentle condition, although of Indian blood, lifted above everything like want, living in comfort; and, as compared with people about them, in a certain affluence—people from whom, therefore, in any other society, you might certainly expect a knowledge of the common rules of morality. Yet when I was introduced to the daughter, and naturally asked her something about her father, supposing him to be the absent captain, the mother answered, smiling, quite as a matter of course, "Nao tem pai; e filha da fortuna"—she hasn't any father; she is the daughter of chance. In the same way, when the daughter showed me two children of her own, little fair people, many shades lighter than herself, and I asked her whether their father was at war, like all the rest of the men, she gave me the same answer, "They haven't any father." It is the way the Indian or half-breed women here always speak of their illegitimate children and they say it without an intonation of sadness or shame, as if they said the father was absent or dead, though to us it has the most melancholy significance. Children are quite frequently ignorant of their parentage. They know about their mother, for all the care and responsibility falls upon her, but they have no knowledge of their father; nor does it seem to occur to the woman that she or the children have any claim upon him.

Yet I must say that the life of these Indian women, so far as I have seen it, seems enviable in comparison with that of the Brazilian lady in the Amazonian towns. The former has a healthful outdoor life; she has her canoe on the lake or river and her paths through the forests to come and go; she has her daily occupations, being busy not only with

the care of her house and children, but in making tapioca or in drying and rolling tobacco, while the men are hunting or fishing, and she has her frequent festa days to enliven her working life. It is, on the contrary, impossible to imagine anything more dreary and monotonous than the life of the Brazilian senhora in the towns. Many a Brazilian lady passes day after day without stirring beyond her four walls, scarcely ever showing herself at the door or window; for she is always in a slovenly dishabille unless she expects company. It is sad to see these stifled existences. Without any charm of family life, without books or culture, the Brazilian senhora either sinks contentedly into a vapid, aimless life, or frets against her chains and is as discontented as she is useless.—From a Journey in Brazil by Mrs. Louis Agassiz.

These two pictures speak for themselves. It will be observed that Mrs. Agassiz describes the Indian woman as without knowledge of "the common rules of morality." "Without an intonation of sadness or shame she gave the answer, 'They haven't any father;'" yet this woman without knowledge of the common rules of morality (this free woman) supports herself in a neat and beautiful home, supports the child without a father and greatly enjoys life, while the married woman of the towns "in a slovenly dishabille passes a vapid existence or frets against her chains and is as discontented as she is useless." J. W. G.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND IDA BALLOU.

I have been very glad to read in DISCONTENT, of August 2, Ida Ballou's straight-out opposition to the public schools. As she is one of the editors of the Boston Investigator, it is gratifying to know that freethinkers of her position are becoming cognizant of how antipodal to free thought development the public schools are. So long ago as November 25, 1875, I wrote in the Investigator antagonistic to the public schools, and a few years subsequent to that date the Investigator gave me a lengthy hearing on the subject.

On May 20 of this year I had a short article in the Investigator, entitled "Why Public Schools Should Be Abolished," and in the Investigator's issue of May 27 Socialist Alex. E. Wight replied to me on "Why Public Schools Should Not Be Abolished." The Socialist is the lone defender of the public schools. They are the foundation of his idea. As Mr. Wight said, so it is: the children that are educated in them are likely to ask for state food, clothing and shelter later on in life.

As every Socialist is friendly upon principle to the public schools, so every Anarchist should be opposed to them upon principle. Emma Goldman has left herself upon record as opposed to them. Every freethinker, not a Socialist, should also be opposed to the public schools. All the old claims made for them as the bulwarks of free thought have disappeared. The Catholics themselves are accepting them in full force. To be a freethinker a man must be educated to think free, and the public schools confine thought to processes that hardly admit of it at all.

I am already acquainted with a number of freethinkers who are not Anarch-

ists, but who have come to the conclusion that the public schools are what I say they are. The number of these believers might be greatly increased if all who oppose them would form a press-writer's association and follow each other up on the subject in the papers open to a discussion of the subject. I would like to here ask Ida Ballou if she and I cannot further this movement? I shall at least take pleasure in calling attention to her DISCONTENT article wherever possible. FRANCIS B. LIVESSEY.

Sykesville, Md.

IMPENDING RETRIBUTION.

I would be glad to live to see the great impending battle fought in this country that would free forever the oppressed from the tyrannous yoke of capital. It seems strange to me that men are indifferent to or ignorant of the war of ideas which is agitating our whole country, between capital and labor, which must inevitably result in the sterner conflict of arms, which we hope will end the strife, and place it out of the power of man ever again to oppress his fellows by fraud and injustice, such as now enables capital so fearfully to tyrannize over the helpless and industrious poor. How stupid must be the tyrants of our time to suppose that a day of just and awful retribution does not await them in the near future. Where else in nature do they see her laws violated without bringing its appropriate penalty? Every blow dealt by the hand of injustice and tyranny will assuredly be returned on the smiter with accumulated power. The longer you violate law, the more terrible will be the penalty when the forces of nature react. As well may we expect to thrust our hand into the flames and feel no pain, as to plunder and oppress and reap not the penalty of wrong doing.

The fashionable churches, with their well-fed clergymen, seldom put forth an effort in the cause of the poor that begins to reach the source of the evil. It is their business to save souls, and every rebuke of wrong in high places puts in peril their bread and butter. To the poor they preach contentment under the wrongs inflicted on them when they should strive to arouse every manly feeling of self respect, and urge them to rise in their strength and shake off the burdens which are unnecessarily heaped upon them. The working classes need not expect help or encouragement from that quarter till they so far redeem themselves that their help is not needed. Nor need they expect help from the press. The conductors of newspapers, throughout the country, are drawn into their work by the love of money and a popular position in society. They, of course, must run in the popular current—be on the side of wealth and power. Success will only come by an unswerving, unselfish devotion to principle, and an exalted, manly self reliance. Without them we will have to wait yet long years of toil and degradation.—W. E. Lukens, in Morrison, Ill., Independent, 1874.

Every employment enables us to ennoble ourselves by an honest endeavor to do our best, or to belittle ourselves by a disgraceful and lazy thought that an imperfect or even slovenly performance will do well enough for this time.—Joseph Emerson.

"SALVATION."

I strayed into a "city mission,"
Where they preach "the crucified,"
And the man on the platform told us
How "our saviour" had lived and died.
"Are you saved, my brother?" he ques-
tioned,
And it stirred in my mind a thought,
"Are you saved my brother, my sister?"
Saved! and pray from what?

From what does man need salvation?
From the fear of hunger and cold,
And other evils far worse than these,
For the loved ones his heart may hold
From the gnawing of desperation,
As marks the onward roll
Of the terrible "wheels of progress,"
Crushing them body and soul;

From injustice and cruel oppression,
From the greed of his fellow men,
From the robbery of the licensed thief,
Who steals from him all he can;
From legal plunder and murder,
From the rich man's brutal lust,
From the "charity" of the wealthy,
Who "give" but will not be just.

He needs to be saved from the devil,
The infernal devil of pride,
Of wealth, of birth, and of station
And a thousand things beside,
Which separate him from his fellow,
And make of his heart a nest
For all the unclean and hateful thoughts
Which breed in a human breast.

He needs to be saved from the worship
Of Mammon, the god of this world,
The prince of an evil dominion,
Who soon from his throne shall be
hurled,
For truly the hour is striking
When "might" shall no longer be
"right";
When Christ shall come to his own
again,
For "at evening it shall be light."

Aye, man shall be saved by the coming
Of the spirit of brotherhood.
When again as it was at the dawning,
Man and all else shall be good;
Saved from uncurbed passions,
Saved from his worldly pelf,
Saved from fear and from hatred,
Saved from his evil self.

G. A. KENNAN.

LAND THE ONLY CAPITAL.

What you call "wages," practically, is the quantity of food which the possessor of the land gives you to work for him. There is, finally, no capital but that. If the money of all the capitalists in the world were destroyed; the notes and bills burnt; the gold irrevocably buried, and all the machines and apparatus of manufacturers crushed, by a mistake in signal, in one catastrophe; and nothing remained but the land, with its animals and vegetables, and buildings for shelter, the poorer population would be very little worse off than they are at this instant; and their labor, instead of being "limited" by the destruction, would be greatly stimulated. They would feed themselves from the animals and growing crops; heap here and there a few tons of ironstone together, build rough walls around them to get a blast, and in a fortnight they would have iron tools again, and be ploughing and fighting, just as usual. It is only we who had the capital would suffer; we should not be able to live idle, as we do now, and many of us—I, for instance—should starve at once; but you, though little the worse, would none of you be the better, eventually, for our loss—or starvation. The removal of superfluous mouths would, indeed, benefit you somewhat, for a time.—Ruskin.

"What is it to us if taxes rise and fall?
Let's laugh at fortune and pay none at
all."

MORALS OF TRADE.

After making all allowances we fear the state of things is very bad. On all sides we have found the result of long personal experience to be the conviction that trade is essentially corrupt. In tones of disgust or discouragement, reprehension or derision, according to their several natures, men in business have, one after another, expressed or implied this belief. The uniform testimony of competent judges is that success is incompatible with strict integrity. To live in the commercial world it appears necessary to adopt its ethical code; neither extending nor falling short of it, neither being less honest nor more honest. Those who sink below its standard are expelled; while those who rise above it are either pulled down to it or ruined. As in self defence the civilized man becomes a savage among savages, it seems that in self defence the scrupulous trader is obliged to become as unscrupulous as his competitors. On all sides we have met with the same conviction, that for those engaged in the ordinary trades there are but two courses—either to adopt the practice of their competitors, or to give up business. Men in different occupations, and in different places—men naturally conscientious, who manifestly chafed under the degradation they submitted to, have one and all expressed to us the sad belief that it is impossible to carry on trade with strict rectitude. Their concurrent opinion, independently given by each, is, that the scrupulously honest man must go to the wall.—Herbert Spencer.

SLAVERY IN HAWAIIAN ISLANDS.

Slavery and involuntary servitude of the most degrading form exists in the Hawaiian Islands today as a means for the enforcement of contracts made by laborers to work on the sugar and coffee plantations. Thirty-six Galicians are now confined in Oahu prison, Honolulu, because they refused to comply longer with the onerous conditions imposed on them by their masters. They were convicted of "deserting contract service," and were sentenced to indefinite imprisonment. They can gain release only by buying their way out of prison or going back to the cane fields. And such slavery is openly practiced under the American government, which pretends to protect the weak against the strong and the constitution of which provides that neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall exist within the United States or any place subject to their jurisdiction! Yet the dear people never seem to learn that the flag is an emblem of plunder and this government exists to protect the plunderers.—Ex.

Postmaster J. M. McAnulty received a telegram lately from Postoffice Inspector McAfee which stated that I. N. Lee, the man who is wanted for sending obscene matter through the mail, had been arrested at Ottawa, Kas. Lee has been chased all over the country the past four months and was located at Nevada, he having been here three or four days. Postmaster McAnulty notified the inspector of Lee being here, but when the inspector arrived Lee skipped. Later McAnulty received a notice to send Lee's mail to Ottawa, Kan., and the inspector went at once to that point where he captured his man.—Nevada, Mo., Mail.

TRAMPS.

What are tramps? A tramp is a man, an unfortunate man, because he can find no work. He starts out and travels because he wants to work, and on, on he goes, foot-sore and weary, asking, often begging for work. Who ever heard of a tramp ten, five or even three years ago? No one! They are the products of recent times. The accusation made against these men is that they will not work. Try them and see! Nine out of ten will. It is true, idleness begets sloth and indifference to work. Men who have no home, no friends, no future, who sleep in stables and fence corners and pig pens, have and can have no ambition. They lose heart and become vagrants. But have they not been made such? Society itself has created every tramp who is compelled to beg. The cursed systems which capital and monopoly have invented to grasp the rewards of industry from the hands of the toilers who produce the wealth of the land, are themselves solely responsible for the army of tramps. Let the public beware how they eradicate the tramp nuisance; how they punish the unfortunate men who are driven from the mine, shop, bench and anvil to travel in hopeless search of work.—National Labor Tribune, 1875.

READ AND REMEMBER.

This association is simply a land-holding institution, and can take no part in the starting of an industry. All industries are inaugurated by the members interested and those willing to help them. Just now we have about 65 people here (men, women and children). Streets are not opened yet and we have no sidewalks. Those thinking of coming here must expect to work, as it is not an easy job to clear this land and get it ready for cultivation. The only industry established at present is logging, and that is very hard work. We are not living communistic as a body; only two families are living that way, but there is nothing in our articles of incorporation and agreement to prohibit any number of persons from living in that manner if AGREEABLE.

HOW TO GET HERE.

Parties intending to visit us will come to Tacoma and take the steamer TY-PHOON for Joes Bay. The steamer leaves Commercial dock every day, except Tuesday and Sunday, at 2.30 p. m. Leaves Sunday at 8 a. m. Be sure to ask the captain to let you off at JOES BAY.

A noted evangelist, says the Outlook, is fond of telling of his experiences in preaching to the negroes in the south. At the close of one of his meetings a very large old colored woman came up to him and shook his hand warmly while she said: "God bless you, Brudder Jones! You's evahbody's preacher, an' evahbody loves ter heah you preach, an' evah niggah love to heah you; an' Brudder Jones, you preaches mo' like a niggah than any white man that evah lived; an' Brudder Jones, you've got a white skin, but t'ank de Lawd, you've got a black heart!"

The next number of Free Society Library, Moribund Society and Anarchy, translated from the French of Jean Grave by Voltairine de Cleyre, will soon be issued. Price 25c. Order from Free Society, 43 Sheridan street, San Francisco.

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THE ALTRUIST is a monthly paper, partly in phonetic spelling, and devoted to equal rights, mutual assistance, united labor, and common property. It is issued by the Altruist Community, of St. Louis, whose members hold all their property in common, live and work together in a permanent home for their mutual enjoyment, assistance and support, and both men and women have equal rights and decide on all its business affairs by their majority vote. It now has 3,920 acres of land in Southeast Missouri on which it offers a home and employment for life to all acceptable persons who may wish to join it. 25c a year; specimen copy free. A. Longley, editor, 2819 Olive street, St. Louis, Mo.

Articles of Incorporation and Agreement of the Mutual Home Association.

Be it remembered, that on this 17th day of January, 1898, we, the undersigned, have associated ourselves together for the purpose of forming a corporation under the laws of the State of Washington.

That the name of the corporation shall be The Mutual Home Association.

The purpose of the association is to assist its members in obtaining and building homes for themselves and to aid in establishing better social and moral conditions.

The location of this corporation shall be at Home City, located on Joes Bay, Pierce County, State of Washington; and this association may establish in other places in this state branches of the same where two or more persons may wish to locate.

Any person may become a member of this association by paying into the treasury a sum equal to the cost of the land he or she may select and one dollar for a certificate and subscribing to this agreement.

The affairs of this association shall be conducted by a board of trustees, elected as may be provided by the by laws.

A certificate of membership shall entitle the legal holder to the use and occupancy of not less than one acre of land nor more than two (less all public streets) upon payment annually into the treasury of the association a sum equal to the taxes assessed against the tract of land he or she may hold.

All money received from memberships shall be used only for the purpose of purchasing land. The real estate of this association shall never be sold, mortgaged or disposed of. A unanimous vote of all members of this association shall be required to change these articles of incorporation.

No officer, or other person, shall ever be empowered to contract any debt in the name of this association.

All certificates of membership shall be for life.

Upon the death of any member a certificate of membership shall be issued covering the land described in certificate of membership of deceased:

First: To person named in will or bequest.
Second: Wife or husband.
Third: Children of deceased; if there is more than one child they must decide for themselves.

All improvements upon land covered by certificate of membership shall be personal property, and the association as such has no claim thereto.

Any member has the right of choice of any land not already chosen or set aside for a special purpose.

CERTIFICATE OF MEMBERSHIP.

This is to certify that has subscribed to the articles of incorporation and agreement and paid into the treasury of the Mutual Home Association the sum of . . . dollars, which entitles . . . to the use and occupancy for life of lot . . . block . . . as platted by the association, upon complying with the articles of agreement